



Guide to Jury Summons

INTRODUCTION

You are one of many people who have been chosen for jury service. As a juror, you will play a vital part in the legal system. Jury service is one of the most important civic duties that anyone can be asked to perform. The experiences and knowledge of each person summoned to serve will differ, yet each individual juror will be asked to consider the evidence presented and then apply their common sense in order to determine whether or not the defendant is guilty. Jurors usually try the more serious criminal cases such as burglary, fraud, or murder. These trials take place in the Crown Court.

When a jury reaches a verdict, they are not only making a decision that affects the individual defendant, they are also making a decision that affects the communities in which they live. Few decisions made by members of the public have such an impact upon society as a jury's verdict.

This booklet contains guidance notes to help you complete the form 'Reply to the Jury Summons'.

WHAT TO DO

Within 7 days from the day on which you received your jury summons, you are required to complete all sections in the form 'Reply to the Jury Summons', and return it to the Jury Central Summoning Bureau in the enclosed envelope. The Jury Central Summoning Bureau's address and contact details are printed on the jury summons.

You can find out more about jury service on the GOV.UK website at **<https://www.gov.uk/jury-service>**.

If you have any questions or difficulties when completing the form 'Reply to the Jury Summons' that either this booklet or the website do not answer, the Jury Central Summoning Bureau will be pleased to help you. If writing to the Jury Central Summoning Bureau, please supply your full name and address, post code and juror's number.

NOTE 1 ARE YOU QUALIFIED FOR JURY SERVICE?

You are qualified for jury service if:

- you will be at least 18 years old, and under 70 years old, on the day that you start your jury service; and
- you are registered as a parliamentary or local government elector (**Note:** in order to be registered to vote you must be a British, Irish, EU or qualifying Commonwealth citizen – visit www.electoralcommission.org.uk for further information on qualifying Commonwealth citizens); and
- you have lived in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man for any period of at least 5 years since you were 13 years old. (If you have any outstanding application with the UK Border Agency, then please contact the Jury Central Summoning Bureau as you may not be eligible for jury service).

You are not qualified for jury service if you come within either Box A or Box B.

BOX A: MENTAL HEALTH ACT 1983 and MENTAL CAPACITY ACT 2005

You are disqualified from jury service if:

- you are, for the time being, liable to be detained under the Mental Health Act 1983; or
- you are, for the time being, resident in a hospital on account of a mental disorder within the meaning of the Mental Health Act 1983; or
- you are, for the time being, subject to a guardianship order under section 7 of the Mental Health Act 1983, or to a community treatment order under section 17A of that Act; or
- you lack mental capacity (see below) to serve as a juror, within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

What is Mental Capacity?

Mental capacity is the ability to make a decision for yourself. People who cannot do this are said to 'lack capacity' under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. This must be due to an impairment of or disturbance in the functioning of the mind or brain which may be due to illness, injury, learning disability, or mental health problems. To have capacity a person must be able to:

- Understand the information that is relevant to the decision they want to make.
- Retain the information long enough to be able to make the decision.
- Weigh up the information available to make the decision.
- Communicate the decision by any means.

BOX B: BAIL and CONVICTIONS

You are disqualified from jury service if you are currently on bail in criminal proceedings.

You are also disqualified from jury service if, in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, or if in relation to a service offence under the Armed Forces Act 2006 anywhere in the world:

- you have **ever** been sentenced to:
 - imprisonment, or a term of detention, of 5 years or more;
 - or imprisonment for public protection or detention for public protection;
 - or imprisonment, custody or detention for life;
 - or an extended sentence under either of sections 226A, 226B, 227 or 228 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, (including such a sentence imposed as a result of section 219A, 220, 221A or 222 of the Armed Forces Act 2006) or section 210A of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995;
 - or detention at Her Majesty's pleasure or during the pleasure of the Secretary of State.
- you have in the last **10 years**:
 - served any part of a sentence of imprisonment or detention;
 - or received a suspended sentence of imprisonment or a suspended order for detention.

You are also disqualified if in the last 10 years in England and Wales you have been subject to a community order (including a community rehabilitation order, community punishment order, community punishment and rehabilitation order, drug treatment and testing order, or a drug abstinence order).

You will also be disqualified if you have in the last 10 years been subject to any equivalent order under the law of Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, any of the Channel Islands, or a community or overseas community order under the Armed Forces Act 2006.

WARNING:

You may be committing an offence and may be fined up to £5,000 if convicted, if you serve on a jury knowing you are disqualified by reason of anything in Box B.

NOTE 2 APPLICATIONS FOR DEFERRAL AND EXCUSAL

The normal expectation is that **everyone** summoned for jury service will serve at the time for which they are summoned. However, it is recognised that there will be occasions when it is not reasonable for a person to serve at the time for which they are summoned. In these circumstances, you must apply to the Jury Central Summoning Bureau and ask for jury service to be deferred to a later date or to be excused altogether. This includes if you have concerns that the jury service will conflict with work commitments, despite employers being required by law to give you unpaid time off.

Deferral

If you believe that you will not be able to serve on the date specified in the summons, you must clearly state in full the reasons for this when you return the form 'Reply to the Jury Summons'. You must also state on what other days during the next 12 months you **will** be able to attend so that the Jury Central Summoning Bureau can rearrange your jury service to a more convenient date.

Please remember that while the Jury Central Summoning Bureau will make every effort to ensure that your jury service begins on a convenient date, this cannot always be guaranteed. Your jury service can only be deferred once.

Excusal

If you believe that you cannot serve as a juror at **any time** during the next 12 months, you must clearly state in full your reasons on the form 'Reply to the Jury Summons'. You may be asked to provide evidence to verify your claim. The Jury Central Summoning Bureau will contact you if they need additional information. **Please check with the Jury Central Summoning Bureau before obtaining any medical certificate.**

Please note that applications for excusal will only be considered for exceptional circumstances. In all other circumstances, deferral will be offered as far as is possible.

You have the right to be excused from the jury service if you have served as a juror, or attended to serve on a jury, during the two years preceding service of the juror summons. You may serve again if you wish, but you may exercise your right of excusal by completing Part 3 of the form 'Reply to the Jury Summons'. Please ensure you provide details of the court you attended, as we will check your service.

Your summons may be discharged if you have insufficient understanding of English. Please contact the Jury Central Summoning Bureau if you believe this to be the case. → (Note 2 continues on page 5.)

It is a criminal offence, and if convicted you may have to pay a fine of up to £1,000, if:

you refuse when requested to provide any information necessary to determine if you are qualified to be a juror

or you give false information, or cause or permit someone else to give false information on your behalf, in order to evade jury service.

NOTE 3 HOW LONG WILL JURY SERVICE LAST?

Jury service usually lasts for up to two weeks.

The nature of criminal cases can vary greatly, and you may be required to serve for longer than the usual two weeks. If a trial is likely to last longer you will be asked at the court if this will be difficult for you. You may be asked to provide proof of your difficulty. The court will try to meet your requirements as far as is practicable.

NOTE 4 CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM (CJS) EMPLOYEES

If you are employed by any Police Force, HM Prison Service or any prosecuting authority, then you should provide details of your occupation, your employer and your workplace location in Part 1 Question D.

In all cases, Criminal Justice System staff are advised to check their organisation's HR policy regarding jury service.

NOTE 5 ABOUT DISABILITY

Part 4 of the Jury Summons helps HM Courts & Tribunals Service determine whether special arrangements are needed to assist you whilst at court. It may also be possible to arrange a pre-service visit to the court before your jury service commences for you to assess their facilities. The Jury Central Summoning Bureau will notify the court of any disability or needs that you have indicated in Part 4 of the form 'Reply to Jury Summons'.

NOTE 6 CONFIRMATION OF JURY SERVICE

Once the form 'Reply to the Jury Summons' has been processed, if you are expected to serve as summoned, you will be sent a confirmation letter and pack. This pack will include all the information you need for your first day of jury service and will contain information to assist you while you are serving on a jury. Please remember to bring the confirmation letter or your jury summons as this will be used to verify your identity.

If any of your personal details on this summons have changed please provide a **copy** of the documentation to confirm the change, such as a marriage certificate, driver's licence or utility bills. Please do not send original documents).

NOTE 7 FURTHER INFORMATION

If you are still unclear how to fill in the form 'Reply to the Jury Summons', or if you have any other queries regarding your jury service, please visit the GOV. UK website at **<https://www.gov.uk/jury-service>**.

For any other queries please contact the Jury Central Summoning Bureau on 0845 803 8003 (local rate) or 020 7202 6800, or by e-mail at jurysummoning@hmcts.gsi.gov.uk